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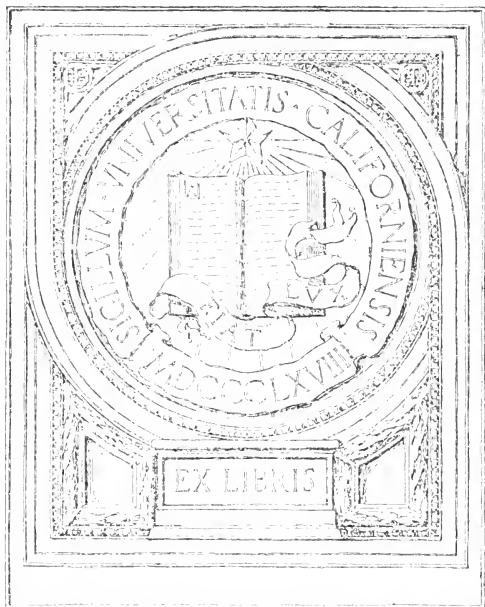
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# THE AGRARIAN LAW OF YUCATAN

By the Governor and Military  
Commander of the State

GENERAL SALVADOR ALVARADO

MÉRIDA 1915

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### NOTICE TO READER.

OUTSIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ENACTED ANY MORE DRASTIC AGRARIAN LAWS THAN THOSE DECREED BY GOVERNOR SALVADOR ALVARADO OF YUCATAN.

READERS WHO WILL TAKE THE TROUBLE TO PERUSE THE LAW PUBLISHED IN THIS PAMPHLET WILL CONFER A FAVOR BY SENDING THEIR OPINION ON THE SUBJECT.

KINDLY ADDRESS C/O

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ARRANGING THE BY-LAWS  
OF THE  
AGRARIAN LAW

SALVADOR ALVARADO, Governor and Military Commander of the State of Yucatan.

IN CONSIDERATION OF the fact that no one is exclusive owner of the land in like manner as no one can be exclusive owner of either the light or the atmosphere,—

THAT this law responds to a mandate from the people and satisfies a social necessity, unavoidable and inevitable.

THAT in order to be worthy of the Revolution the Revolutionist must be consistent in his principles, faithful to his preachings and sincere in his own convictions.

THAT whatever may be the circumstances and consequences of this law, the Government of the Revolution confronts them, faces them, responds to them and openly makes itself jointly liable for their tendencies and the end they wish to attain;

THAT in response to the cry of "Tierras y Libros," (Land and Books) a flag was hoisted which to-day, more than ever, needs to be upheld by a firm hand and an upright judgment, since to defraud popular aspirations would be to raise a new protest, a national clamor that would be all the more energetic because it is all the more justified.

THAT this law bears the stamp of approval, like a halo, the splendor of a thousand combats and the bright red stain of the blood shed by many a wounded hero in defense of his rights among which the culminating one, seen with the clarity of truth, is the reclamation of the land for the people.

THAT this decree has been carefully studied because of the fact that we had to bear in mind the progress reached in this matter by the opposing parties who attacked the agrarian policy, but outside of that was the obstacle of which we could not make any precise and definite estimate, viz. : the very extraordinary circumstances of the State, which so profoundly preoccupied the Government.

THAT it will be necessary for the large landowners to relinquish something in order to alleviate the necessities of the majority, since, if, by virtue of this decree, which has to be executed at any cost, they continue in their inveterate selfishness, the Revolution will sweep away for us all difficulties, because it is not to be stopped by obstacles of mean conservatism, just as the strident cry of France was not stifled in spite of the glories of Lafayette sung over the vast expanse of Ocean, by the sun that shone over two continents and by the soul of two strong and brave nations.

THAT if we, charged with having to fulfil the mandates of the Revolution, should in the least abandon it, we would have committed the crime of high treason to the Country, playing the sad role of the

useless or the cowardly and the imbecility of trying to stop by our imagination the constant and ever resounding Falls of Niagara.

THAT the national aspiration is clearly summed up to-day in the conquest of the economic independence of the Mexican people, the only condition that will permit them to make free and happy homes.

THAT riches concentrated in the hands of a few do not make any people happy and much less when the monopoly embraces the land, the only source of riches.

THAT, fundamentally, the right to the land of certain people, when there are thousands that have been organized like a herd to till it, obtaining only the crumbs of production, is from every point of view iniquitous, and the greatest imposition that has existed in the world in order to sustain the chosen ones at the expense of the ignorant, inevitably spreading fanaticism among them.

THAT before the universal destruction of all the religious systems and the commercial spirit in order to obtain the happiness of the people, there rises finally the clear conception that every man has the right to obtain by means of work that which signifies his well-being directly from natural sources; which means that every man has a right to a piece of land, in which by cultivation and by all the forms of work which modern economy teaches, he may obtain all that is necessary to sustain himself with a certain amount of comfort and with the opportunity to practice the social relations necessary for the elevation of his spirit gaining, in addition, certain means for economy for his old age, all of which signifies material welfare for his family, which is the foundation in general terms of the happiness of peoples.

THAT decidedly the securing of this well-being is the most burning necessity of the Nation, and it is the final conquest of the Revolution, which is synthesized in the decree of January 6, 1915, issued by the First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, D. Venustiano Carranza, who finally announced the necessity of solving the agrarian problem in Mexico by creating the small property and intensifying production, which constitutes the national wealth, and, when shared, the happiness of the people.

THAT in conformity with the said decree the public commons shall be established again or what in the spirit of the word means "lands for the people;" and that at the same time that the lands are to be given to the people, the increase of the production must be assured, which would not happen if the commons should be in cultivation and should be handed over to the community without any restriction or regulation which would undoubtedly bring about an immediate devastation of what exists.

THAT the same decree may establish clearly that if there are no commons, the necessary land will be dispossessed in order that the people may work it, thus establishing forever the right of dispossession by reason of public need.

THAT it is necessary, therefore, undoubtedly, that the earth be procured which the people require in order that by means of the work they may be able to subsist, and that it must be distributed in a rational

manner, in order to assure the production and guarantee the financial policy of the State.

THAT thereupon all the commons shall be restored and granted to the inhabitants who are older than seventeen years, natives or foreigners, who wish personally to cultivate them, dedicating to the land their interest and all their energies, by which the small holding will be nourished and protected, this being the only foundation of the grandeur and prosperity of peoples; the commons and other suburban lands will be distributed in sections of twenty-five hectares, and of two hundred hectares in the pastoral communities; but of the lands planted with henequen (maguey) the largest surface will be ten hectares.

THAT the cultivated common lands which may be protected by legitimate titles in accordance with the law of January 6, 1915, issued by the First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, will be paid for; the cultivated ones according to their present taxed value.

THAT the common lands having been disposed of, the remaining suburban lands which are the nearest will be dispossessed, as well as the pastoral grounds, which are not cultivated, to be paid for according to their present taxed value; dispossession that will take place when the inhabitants who desire them are found.

THAT the small landowners of the cultivated farms shall be respected, while the extent of their cultivated land shall never exceed fifty hectares.

THAT the water for the provision of the towns should be declared to be of public utility, as well as the forests of the State, which will have a direct share in the protection and increase of these, if it so happens that the Federation grants it at the request of this Government.

THAT the Government of the State not only has a platonic interest in distributing the lands to the people, but its principal object is to have the distributed lands put practically into active production.

THAT the suburban lands are the commons and the fields which serve to augment them, extending eight kilometers, as the bird flies, (por viento) beyond the principal plaza (center) or church of the town.

THAT the pastoral fields are the most widely separated, and may be situated far beyond the limits of the suburban fields.

THAT the fields with legal title in accordance with the decree of the sixth of January, which may be dispossessed, will be purchased with bonds redeemable in fifty years, with interest of 4% annually, guaranteed by the State, without preventing their being amortizable each year in the form which is expressed.

THAT those who possess land holdings in any other part of the Republic whatever, have no right to any lot, because this law provides only for the disinherited.

THAT the requests for the first division of lands must be made to the Local Agrarian Committee from the promulgation of this decree until the 28th day of February next; that the first of February and the first of August of each year the lands will be distributed, as long as there are more than five requests in each comunal or municipal district.

FOR these considerations I have had issued the following:

# BY-LAWS OF THE AGRARIAN LAW OF JANUARY 6, 1915.

## CHAPTER I.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMISSION AND OF THE AGRARIAN COMMITTEES.

*Article 1.* In accordance with Article IV of the law of January 6, 1915, there will be operative in the State:

A. A Local Agrarian Commission formed of five persons named by the Executive of the State, with the powers which the said law and the present by-laws assign to them.

The members of this Commission will establish themselves in assembly composed of a President, a Secretary and three voters, which will have their special by-laws.

B. The special Executive Committees composed of three persons who will act in each Communal District, will be named by the Executive of the State, with the powers which the said Law and the present By-Laws assign to them.

*Article 2.* The members of the Local Agrarian Commission as well as those of the Executive Committees will have emoluments which are granted by the Governor of the State.

*Article 3.* The Executive Committees will be subordinate and dependent directly upon the Local Agrarian Commission.

*Article 4.* The Local Agrarian Commission will have the necessary employees, which will be named by the Executive of the State, at the proposal of the said Commission.

*Article 5.* The following may not form part of the Local Agrarian Commission or of the Executive Committees:—political authorities, soldiers in active service, or those who possess lands with a surface of 200 hectares or more.

## CHAPTER II.

### GENERAL, UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES.

*Article 6.* Every Mexican or foreigner residing in the State, older than 17 years of age, has the right, provided that he wishes to dedicate himself personally to cultivating it, to possess a parcel of land, from which, by means of work, he may be able to obtain sufficient in order to subsist with his family, succeeding by such means in securing his economic independence and the necessary comforts for living peacefully, according to his social condition.

The foreigners who receive lots in conformity with this law, will not be able to maintain any right of foreign citizenship, nor seek under any circumstances, diplomatic or consular claims, in anything that pertains to the object of these By-Laws, being obliged to conform absolutely to the laws of the country.

It is understood that every individual has the right to acquire his material improvement, by making use of a part of the natural resources of the State, in order that by his work he may secure his well-being and that of the Nation.



*Article 7.* In order to comply with the spirit of the decree of January 6, 1915, it is established that: the Government of the State, by means of the Agrarian Commission, must intervene in every transaction which may be made in regard to land, in conformity with this Law.

*Article 8.* In conformity with the decree of January 6, 1915, the distribution of lands among those who wish to work them immediately, will be made as follows:

- I. In the commons, which will have the dimensions which the Law of the State of 1844 assigns them, although in order to complete them there may be the necessity of dispossessing land which has been well acquired, in conformity with the aforesaid decree of January 6th.
- II. In the lands adjoining the commons, when these are not sufficient, whether they are the property of natives, or lands of which natives or foreigners may be dispossessed.
- III. In the fields which are the property of natives in which new towns may be formed.
- IV. In the fields which may be dispossessed of natives or foreigners in order to form new towns.

The order and more detailed distribution will be found in Article 32.

*Article 9.* It is declared that the water for the provision of the towns and for irrigation, is of public utility, and that, therefore, the Government will investigate and propound before the federation the nullification of the water concessions granted since the year 1856, if the said concessions are a detriment to the towns, or if the water may be of greater service to a greater number of farmers.

If there are any other grants, wells, or particular deposits which are sufficiently valuable to be taken over in order that they may be distributed for the benefit of the majority, their dispossession will be proposed, the payment to the National Treasury to be in conformity with that paid for those not dispossessed, and according to the result of an appraisal when work of this kind is to be done.

*Article 10.* It is declared that the forests of the State are of public utility, and it will be proposed to the Federation that the State should take a direct participation in their protection and propagation.

*Article 11.* In conformity with the decree of January 6, 1915, the commons are to be handed over to the communities, which, after being converted into Free Municipalities, the said lands will be governed with every liberty, while they are being distributed in conformity with these By-Laws.

*Article 12.* Propaganda in regard to agriculture and the organization of Agricultural Banks, in order to help the small cultivator, is declared to be of public utility, since the State not only has a platonic interest in distributing lands to the people, but its object is that the distributed lands may be put practically into active production.

*Article 13.* The lands in Yucatan are to be divided, for the accomplishment of these By-Laws, into two classes:

- I. Lands adjoining the towns: the commons and the lands which serve to augment them, extending as far as to complete a quadrangle concentric with the common, of eight kilometers as the bird flies, and it may be sixteen kilometers by actual measurement. For the operation of these By-Laws these lands will be called "SUBURBAN LANDS."
- II. Lands separated by more than 8 kilometers from the towns and cities, which for the operation of these By-Laws will be called "PASTORAL LANDS."

*Article 14.* Every individual, as indicated in Article 1, of these By-Laws, has the right of possessing one lot of land, whose area will comprise, of the SUBURBAN LANDS, from 20 to 25 hectares, or 200 hectares of PASTORAL LANDS.

In case the land is found to be planted with henequen, the maximum area which will constitute one lot will be 10 hectares.

*Article 15.* The tramways and the neighborhood telephone, whether they are in operation within the present properties, or whether they communicate with the latter or with the towns, will be maintained within their respective rights, and the one holding the franchise, or proprietor, will have the right of way or of communication which the beneficiaries will grant to him.

*Article 16.* The dispossessions by reason of public need will be made in conformity with the respective decree of October 14, 1914, issued by the First Chief of the Constitutionalist Army, C. Venustiano Carranza, with the exception of the lands which may be in cultivation, and which will be purchased at their actual value, which will be fixed by the Local Agrarian Commission.

*Article 17.* The inhabitants of the collections of huts, called hamlets, or "rancherias" and the abandoned villages, will be considered the same as the towns in general, and those which remain there will have the right to the maximum of the 25 hectares indicated, in fields without cultivation, and 10 hectares in fields planted with henequen. There will be assigned to them 25 hectares for a (polygon) space within the town, out of which will be left the necessary area for Schools, markets, etc., etc.

*Article 18.* When land is needed in any town, for extending the town, the Municipal Government, unanimously with the Agrarian Commission, will dispossess those necessary, by reason of public utility.

### CHAPTER III.

#### METHOD OF ACQUIRING THE LANDS AND OF DIVIDING THEM.

*Article 19.* The Agrarian Committees, which will commence their work during the month of December of this year, will convene the inhabitants of the towns, in order to find out who those are that are disposed to obtain lands in conformity with the regulation of these By-Laws, promising to fulfil the conditions of increase in production and effective improvement which is demanded, but they must enjoy,

on the other hand, all the rights which these By-Laws establish. The Agrarian Committee will explain to those interested, with great clearness, the spirit and letter of the Law, in order that they may understand with all scrupulousness the obligation and rights which they will contract upon receipt of a lot of land.

Those who believe that they are able to fulfil these obligations, will fill out a printed form of request, which will be provided gratuitously by the special Committee, in accordance with the instructions which the Local Agrarian Commission may give.

*Article 20.* From the result of the convocation to which the previous article refers, it will be found out what area is required for the first distribution, and in case the common is not sufficient, they will proceed to take the adjacent uncultivated fields, as indicated in Article 32. The field will be divided in lots whose area is in accordance with the model described in Article 14, the appraisal beginning with those lots nearest to the town plot.

*Article 21.* In order to acquire the lands which have to be shared by the town, they will proceed, in the first place, as indicated in the law of January 6, 1915, to reconstruct the commons.

*Article 22.* In conformity with the decree of January 6, 1915, which provided for the dispossession of the lands for reconstructing the commons, if, within the limits of that which is in question of reconstruction, there be found a piece of property whose acquisition may not be justified in accordance with the said decree, it shall be reclaimed.

The small holding described in the following article will be respected, if it is legally protected in conformity with the same decree.

*Article 23.* For the effectiveness of the preceding article, the "small holding" is understood to be that one which does not exceed 50 hectares and providing that it is under cultivation.

If this small holding is not under cultivation, it is to be dispossessed if there is cause for it, and the present proprietor will have the right to a lot of the fixed type, provided he conforms to the conditions required by these By-Laws.

*Article 24.* The lands which are needed, in addition, when the common is not sufficient, will be acquired in conformity with the decree of January 6, 1915, by means of the necessary dispossessions in the adjacent fields, without cultivation, whether they be particular property or not.

*Article 25.* When the lands which are needed for extending the existing towns or for forming new towns, may be national lands, the Agrarian Commission in the State will be responsible for taking the necessary steps for obtaining the grant of them.

*Article 26.* Whatever foreigner who desires to do so, will be able to acquire a rural property in the State, in conformity with these By-Laws, and will be considered like a native, for the results of the same. The lots which foreigners receive must be alternated with those of the Mexicans.

*Article 27.* The mercantile and civil societies formed for working in agriculture, that request lands, will be considered as individuals, and

will be able to hold the right only to one lot, being subjected to all the conditions of the law, and provided that the said societies are governed by the laws of the Republic.

*Article 28.* In the State there will not be given a lot of land to any person who possesses any country property in any other part of the Republic.

*Article 29.* The requests for land which are presented after each time of distribution will be taken into account for the following appraisals, which will take place every six months, the First of February and the First of August of each year, provided that during the said period there have been more than five requests in each communal district.

When these requests exceed the amount of land which is to be disposed of in the Communal District in which they were made, they will be taken into account, from preference, for the first distribution which there may be in whatever other Communal District that they may choose.

*Article 30.* When two or more persons desire to cultivate a single lot of land, they will communicate the fact to the Agrarian Commission, designating their representative, the only one responsible for the fulfilment of these By-Laws, and with whom the Commission will deal in order to transact the business.

*Article 31.* The division of lands in the State will commence immediately, after the necessary topographical work may be finished in each Communal District.

*Article 32.* The order of division will be made as provided in Articles 33 to 35, as follows:

- A. The commons, cultivated or not.
- B. The uncultivated lands in the State.
- C. The lands of great extent, although they may be under cultivation.
- D. The lots of 200 hectares of pastoral land and the special lots of 50 hectares, to which Articles 14 and 35 respectively refer.

*Article 33.* When there are no lands within the common, for placing at auction, then they will proceed, in conformity with Article 32, to the dispossession of the uncultivated fields, adjoining the common, being sure that this dispossession is amplified by an amount not greater than 200 hectares in addition to the lands which are entirely needed. This excess of land will serve, although not to be divided into lots, as pastoral ground for the use of the community.

*Article 34.* When apart from the commons, there is still no land but what is cultivated in the State for distribution, such as has been indicated by these By-Laws, then the cultivated parts of the estates are to be dispossessed, provided that their area is not greater than 50 hectares.

When there shall be such a demand for land, that such small holdings as the lots in the pastoral ground, already described, are necessary for the sustenance of more than one family, then those lots also shall be dispossessed and divided in conformity with the fixed types of 10 and 25 hectares.

*Article 35.* If in the property which is divided, in conformity with these By-Laws, there exists a plan or dwelling of a farm, there is to be set apart a lot of 50 hectares, in which the buildings of the estate are to be enclosed, the present proprietor having the right to continue in the possession of this special lot, provided that he desires to do so, although he may possess other country property in the Republic.

If he indicates that he does not so desire, there will be no cause for the formation of this lot.

*Article 36.* The assignments will be made sure by personal election or by drawing lots, when a single plot may be requested by two or more persons.

*Article 37.* The division having been made, there is to be reserved the area for roads, works of art, public safety, schools, etc.

*Article 38.* In the event that there are superfluous lots within the common, they shall be left to the service of the community in the character of pastoral ground, with the reservation of being able to distribute them as they are requested.

*Article 39.* The distribution of the lands of the estates having been made, the preference will be given to day-laborers who may be working in them at the moment of the distribution; after the said day-laborers have taken their respective lots, the preference is to be given to the individuals comprising the Municipal or Communal District; in the third place, entrance will be given to outside solicitors.

*Article 40.* The workmen of the estates will be registered in the census, for the operation of these By-Laws, and especially so for the distribution of lands, in the town to whose municipal jurisdiction the estate belongs.

*Article 41.* The cultivated lot will be forfeited:

I. When the ordinance in these By-Laws, regarding the conservation of 25 to 30 leaves in each bush of henequen, in conformity with Article 59, is not complied with.

II. When the debt of cultivation through two consecutive periods of three months, remains unpaid.

III. When the lack of care is so manifest in the cultivation of the lot, that there is danger of the plantation being ruined.

IV. When the henequen which the lot produces is to be sold to another person than that of the Commission which regulates the Henequen Market, in accordance with the terms as indicated in Article 60.

V. When the annual contribution of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., to which Article 48 refers, remains unpaid.

VI. In all other cases expressly defined by these By-Laws.

*Article 42.* A lot which is abandoned or left in a state of cultivation will be adjudged in the next division; meanwhile, the Agrarian Commission will be responsible for the cultivation and conservation of the lot, and will charge, in addition, to the new beneficiary, the expenses which have been incurred with this work.

## CHAPTER IV.

### NEW TOWNS.

*Article 43.* Provided that ten or more individuals desirous of working at agriculture, apart of the towns, join themselves together, at least half of them being Mexicans, and none of them a rural proprietor in the Republic, there shall be formed by them a colony as the foundation of a future town. There will be given to them 25 hectares of land as a town plot, out of which will be taken the necessary ground for schools, markets, etc. As a general rule, it is always to be arranged whenever there are foreigners that their lots alternate with those of the Mexicans.

Each colony will have the right to one lot of the fixed pastoral type.

These colonies will be exempt from the payment of the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. contribution during two years, beginning with the date of their establishment.

*Article 44.* The individuals who wish to form the colony, will direct themselves to the Agrarian Commission in the form which shall be indicated in the instructions which may be fixed for work, which may be available in any part of the State, either in national land or that of a particular property without cultivation, or natives or foreigners.

*Article 45.* In the distribution of lots to the colonies, there will hold good the same regulation as that for the distribution of lots in the commons of the towns.

*Article 46.* The distribution of the pastoral ground will commence immediately, if there be solicitors.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TAXES AND IMPROVEMENTS.

*Article 47.* The land for distribution, already divided into lots, will be valued by the tax-list, adding to its initial intrinsic value the cost of measurement, the said valuation serving as a base for the tax and amortization of which the following articles treat.

*Article 48.* The land distributed, not cultivated, will pay the annual rent, corresponding to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the value defined in the preceding article, which, for the operation of these By-Laws, will be called "CONTRIBUTION OF TWO AND ONE-HALF PER CENT."

When the distributed land may contain some that is cultivated, he who receives it will pay, in addition to the contribution of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the value of the said cultivation, which shall be called "DEBT (Amortization) OF CULTIVATION," as follows:

I. Ground with cultivation of henequen in actual production.

In this event the beneficiary will pay the debt of cultivation in as many yearly payments as the production of henequen lasts which was delivered to him, by the half term. In calculating the yearly payment, there will be included in it the interest of four per cent. annually of the cost of the cultivation.

II. Lands with cultivation of henequen although without production.

They will pay the same amount from the year when the production commences and during the time it lasts.

*Article 49.* When the lot contains henequen that is not yet in production, the contribution of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. will be payable within a year from the time which is set for all those who receive lots of this class.

*Article 50.* During the first ten years of occupation, the possessors must introduce gradual improvements of landed immovable property and elements of husbandry, up to an amount at least equal to 50 per cent. of the intrinsic value of the land. These improvements will consist of fences, wells, houses, machines, instruments of labor, etc.

During the first year there will be required only the cutting down of timber, and cultivation of the part of the lot that is possible.

During each year of the following eight years there will be demanded such improvements as are worth five per cent. of the value of the land intrinsically, and in the tenth year, the improvements which are introduced should be worth ten per cent. of this value, being obliged in the following years to conserve, at least, the said improvements.

In the event of fields planted with henequen, the improvement will not be obligatory up to the time that production commences, and the improvement ought then to be in proportion to the value and in the successive steps as indicated in the first part of this article.

*Article 51.* When the proprietor of a lot does not furnish the contribution of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. with the completion of the year, or does not introduce the improvements indicated in Article 50, within the same length of time, he shall forfeit all rights to his lot, so that the Government may assign it to another person who wishes and can cultivate it.

*Article 52.* Upon the fulfilment of this operation, there will be delivered to the retiring beneficiary 50 per cent. of the amount of the accumulated immovable property, freed of all incumbrance. The entering beneficiary will be obliged to take the said improvements for the same price. If there are several solicitors, they will be chosen by drawing lots, as has been indicated.

*Article 53.* The land divided in conformity with these By-Laws and which must duly satisfy all that the latter require, cannot be affected by any authority nor even by the Local Agrarian Commission itself within the term of 999 years.

If these By-Laws are not complied with, the Commission will be the only responsible authority to determine the official procedure, with exclusion of whatsoever other authority, administrative or judicial.

*Article 54.* For the payment of the contribution of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., which comprises the PROPERTY RENTAL ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.) and the LAND TAX (1 per cent.) there are to be established the following principles:

A. The lands in cultivation and production will commence to be paid from the moment of allotment.

B. The distributed suburban lands, in cultivation, and not in production, and those not cultivated, will begin to pay the contribution

of 2½ per cent. within a year of the allotment, counting from the moment of the latter.

C. The pastoral grounds will be exempt during two years from the same contribution counting from the date of the allotment.

*Article 55.* The payment of the debt of cultivation shall be made every three months into the Treasury of the Agrarian Commission.

This same office will receive every six months the contribution of two and one-half to which these By-Laws refer, and of this there will be separated one and one-half per cent. comprising the property rental, and the one per cent. remaining will be remitted to the General Treasury of the State, comprising the Land Tax. This last conflicts in no way with what the Property Law may impose on the land tax.

*Article 56.* The beneficiary will have the right to pay in advance at times which may be arranged for him, the amounts of the DEBT OF CULTIVATION.

*Article 57.* In order to guarantee the payment of the DEBT OF CULTIVATION, each shipper of a train-load of stalks, of which more will be said later, must withhold from the beneficiary 50 per cent. of the henequen gathered, which may not be returned except upon presentation of the receipt of the Agrarian Commission which will guarantee the periodical payment of the debt.

In addition, the Agrarian Commission will announce the methods which it may deem necessary to guarantee always the payment of the DEBT OF CULTIVATION.

*Article 58.* In the Agrarian Commission, a register will be taken of the beneficiaries who must pay the DEBT OF CULTIVATION. When these have paid the debt covering three months, there will be given to them, in addition to the corresponding receipt, a voucher with which they may collect the produce detained as a security, to which Article 57 refers.

There will be, besides, a register in which will be entered the dates of the shipments of the produce.

*Article 59.* In order to avoid immoderate cutting of leaves by the beneficiaries of the distributed land cultivated with henequen, they will be obliged to leave from twenty-five to thirty leaves per plant at each cutting.

*Article 60.* The beneficiaries of distributed lands, and those who produce henequen, will be obliged to sell it to the Commission which regulates the Henequen Market, while this exists as an official institution and with its present organization.

The Agrarian Commission will enforce the carrying out of this article.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DISPOSSESSIONS AND AGRARIAN BONDS.

*Article 61.* The lands which are dispossessed by reason of public need, in order to form the small property, shall be paid for according to the valuation which has been actually manifested in the Tax-list,



adding the improvements introduced subsequent to the manifest, exception being made of the cultivated lands which shall be paid according to the actual value fixed by the Local Agrarian Commission.

*Article 62.* The value of the dispossessed property shall be paid in agrarian bonds, redeemable in fifty years, with the proceeds of 4 per cent. annually, with the guarantee of the LAND TAX in the State. The smaller amounts, less than one hundred dollars, may be paid in cash. The nominal value of these bonds will never exceed the value of the dispossessed land.

*Article 63.* Notwithstanding the fixed term of fifty years, the bonds may be able to be redeemed by annual drawing of lots, when the Government of the State may consider it convenient under the regulation of Article 67.

*Article 64.* The bonds which are issued will be of the value of \$100 (One hundred dollars) in certificates of one, five and ten bonds. They will be made out to bearer, and transferable by simple delivery.

*Article 65.* On the certificates of the bonds must be stated the circumstances of their issuance, and those which serve to identify them, as well as the conditions relative to the proceeds of 4 per cent., and the amortization of the capital.

They must be signed by the Governor of the State, the General Treasurer of the State, and the President of the Agrarian Commission. They will bear on their reverse side the text of the articles of these By-Laws, concerning the rights and obligations which are derived from the said bonds, and, in addition, a page with a hundred coupons which should contain: the number of the bond, that of the coupon, and the amount of the latter.

*Article 66.* The proceeds of the property rental and of the debt of cultivation shall be employed only for the redemption of bonds, in the payment of coupons and in the expenses of the Local Agrarian Commission.

*Article 67.* The drawing of lots for the payment of the bonds will take place every year, provided that the receipts designed for this object permit, besides the payment of the proceeds, the payment of at least one hundred bonds. Each one of the numbers of the lottery corresponds to a series of ten bonds.

*Article 68.* In the official announcement of the State and in a daily paper of large circulation there will be published, not less than fifteen days in advance, the place, date and hour in which the lottery will be held. The drawing of the lots will be presided over by the President of the Agrarian Commission with the assistance of the Treasurer General of the State, and they will promote the respective act which shall be duly recorded.

*Article 69.* Within the following eight days, there will be published in the official periodical the numbers of the fortunate bonds and the day on which they may be presented for collection. The bonds designated by the lot drawing for payment will continue to pay interest from the date fixed for their collection. The bonds drawn by lot and the finished coupons will become void in one year.

*Article 70.* The bonds presented for payment will be cancelled im-

mediately after payment has been made. Periodically the Treasury will proceed in the destruction of the said bonds with the legal formalities.

*Article 71.* The total land tax is the guarantee of the agrarian bonds, in a collective manner, that is to say, it guarantees each and all of the said bonds.

*Article 72.* The payment of the bonds and their proceeds will not be able to be withheld even by judicial order, except in cases of loss or robbery of titles and antecedents required by law.

*Article 73.* In all cases in which, by law or by contract, the funds of corporations, or of people who are incapacitated, are obliged to be invested in the purchase of property or loans on mortgage, the administrators of the said institutions will be able also to invest these funds in the acquirement of agrarian bonds, without the necessity of judicial authority.

Notwithstanding their character, the agrarian bonds may be considered chattels.

*Article 74.* The proceeds of the bonds shall be paid into the Treasury of the Agrarian Commission every six months ending in January and July of each year.

## ..CHAPTER VII.

### ADVANCE PAYMENT TO THE AGRICULTURISTS.

*Article 75.* Every contract of mortgage, rental or sale made by the occupants of the land distributed by the Government shall be of no effect. Finally, every operation for speculating with the land is prohibited, whether the property of the same be altered or modified in any way, except in cases expressly determined by this Law.

The distributed land is not attachable, nor is it subject to any intervention, judicial or administrative.

When the small property holder becomes in need of money for increasing his production, the Government or the institution for rural credit, which has been organized, will be able to advance funds proportionate to the improvements introduced for his working capital or for his harvest, avoiding by this means the premium which makes the work of the agriculturist profitless. This operation, like all those relating to the agrarian policy, will be taken care of through the intervention of the Agrarian Commission.

In order to verify these operations, the State will establish agricultural banks for the use of the small property holder.

*Article 76.* While the said banks are not yet in operation, if the small proprietor wishes to obtain a loan with the security of the stock which he may have, formed or accumulated on the land or on future harvests, such an operation may be transacted, with the prior acceptance of the Agrarian Commission.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AID FOR THE SMALL FARMERS AND THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

*Article 77.* The State will place its credit at the service of the community and will secure sufficient money to effect the work of irrigation for the benefit of the majority, collecting the water by means of a tax. These taxes will be paid only by those directly benefited, and the works will be established on an economical foundation, that is, they will be obliged to produce the necessary amount to cover the interest on the capital invested, plus the amount necessary for the payment, conservation and improvement of the works.

*Article 78.* The State will make every effort possible in order to urge the small farmers to form societies for education and which shall be co-operative for production and consumption. There has been demonstrated the utility of joining together to buy machines, useful for all, and which may not be within the capacity of one. It will direct them in order to organize them or reunite them around the rural schools in order to discuss and agree about their economical affairs, etc.

The propagandists of the Department of Agriculture and the Agrarian Commission, by means of the Executive Committees, will take charge of putting into execution all that this article prescribes.

*Article 79.* The Agrarian Commission will be obliged to lend all kinds of aid to the small proprietors, and very especially to those to whom may have been delivered lots planted with henequen or cane in order that they may form co-operative societies or agricultural syndicates to the end that the earth may give the best return possible by the accumulation of richness and intensive cultivation, by which the condition of the small proprietor may be improved, who, by this means, will care more for the land, devoting himself to it by affection and interest.

*Article 80.* The scraping or separating of the fibre of the henequen will continue to be done in the scraping machines (*desfibradoras*) of the farms until the beneficiaries of the distributed lands establish new scraping machines, obliging the proprietors of the former to receive forcibly, for their separation, the cactus leaves which the said beneficiaries deliver to them, making the separation conform to Article 81.

*Article 81.* The Agrarian Commission will periodically fix the price of the toll of the separating work according to the locality.

If in any Communal District, any proprietor of a train-load of stalks should refuse to work for toll, in conformity with the rate which the Commission has fixed, the latter will take for his account the said train-load of stalks.

When the train-load of stalks of one locality has not the necessary room for separating all the produce, the separating will be done proportionately as fixed by the Agrarian Commission.

*Article 82.* For each train-load of stalks, the proprietor of the separating work keeps a detailed register which contains:

A. The name of the beneficiaries, that of the proprietor of the stalks, and the rest who assist in the work.

B. The daily number of cactus leaves with which each one of those specified in the former separating work assist at the scraping.

C. The net weight of the fibre produced by each one of them.

D. The number of cactus leaves, if they are sold to the master of the separating work, and not to obtain the fibre already separated.

The register will be a check-book record of the transactions, and the principal will be remitted forcibly by the master of the separating work to the Agrarian Commission the last day of each month.

*Article 83.* When the small proprietors wish to sell their cactus leaves to the masters of the fibre-separating machine, the Agrarian Commission will fix the minimum obligatory price, according to the locality.

## CHAPTER IX.

### OF THE INHERITANCE OF THE LOTS.

*Article 84.* The owner of a lot will be able to elect freely his heir among his predecessors or successors in a direct line without limitation of rank, sex or order of birth; failing these, he may choose among his relatives of the same generation, to the sixth grade, and failing these, he may freely choose a stranger.

*Article 85.* None will be able, under any title, to become the beneficiary of more than one lot of land in this State.

*Article 86.* Upon his entrance into the possession of a lot of land an individual is obliged to designate immediately his successor in terms of Article 84. The designation does not require any formality, except that of being written in the presence of two witnesses who may be friends of the beneficiary. When the latter is dead, there is required only the presentation of the said document to the Agrarian Commission, which will have their corresponding notation, and will communicate from their office its contents to the Public Registry of Property and to the Tax-list, in order that in their turn, they make due note of the event. This being done, the property will be conferred upon the new beneficiary, to whom the Agrarian Commission will return the said document duly noted and sealed. The heir is obliged, naturally, to fulfil the requirements of these By-Laws, in each particular.

## CHAPTER X.

### INTERVENTION OF THE STATE IN THE TRANSACTIONS OF PURCHASE AND SALE.

*Article 87.* In conformity with what is indicated in Article 7, of general underlying principles, any transaction which in any manner affects the landed property, will have to pass under the vigilance of the Government, by means of the Agrarian Commission.

When a large proprietor wishes to divide his lands, he will advise the Agrarian Commission, which immediately will hold a convocation

for those who wish to establish themselves as colonists under the conditions which this Law provides for pastoral lands, but, if after two months he has received no requests, then the large proprietor will have the liberty of making the division as he judges convenient, provided he satisfies the conditions in the following article.

*Article 88.* When a large proprietor wishes to divide his lands, he may be able to do so without further limitations than the following:

I. The fractions may not be less than the type of lot fixed by these By-Laws.

II. The price will be paid in agreement with the Agrarian Commission, when it is dealing with lots, whose extent is that fixed by these By-Laws.

### TRANSITORY ANNOUNCEMENTS.

*First Article.* For the first division of lands there will be taken into account only the requests presented since the promulgation of these By-Laws, until the twenty-eighth day of February, 1916.

*Second Article.* These By-Laws will begin to be in force from the day of their promulgation.

*Third Article.* Be it known through all the State by a solemn proclamation.

### CONSTITUTION AND REFORMS.

Mérida, on the third of December, 1915.

S. ALVARADO,  
*The Governor and Military Commander of the State.*

RAFAEL AGUIRRE C.,  
*The Secretary General Int.*

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